

FILM / VIDEO REVIEWS

The Small Faces DVD review [Sexy Intellectual]

By

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THE SMALL FACES *Under Review* DVD

Art criticism is thoroughly an exercise in relativism and subjectivity; at its best it stems from a gut impulse that is then descriptively rationalized, sometimes with reference to a formal critical lexicon.

The Small Faces: Under Review, like other titles in the *Under Review* DVD series, is a mixture of critics waffling on about the brilliance of the artist in question's recorded canon accompanied by footage and pictures of said act. In this case, there's plenty of great film: a buncha songs being performed on the *Studio Hamburg* program and generous samplings from the vintage video clips for "Itchycoo Park," "Lazy Sunday," and "Here Comes The Nice."

As with the other titles, this is not a detailed, exhaustive, scholarly look at the band's history, influences or aesthetic underpinnings, but a more casual overview done in broad strokes. But as the Small Faces never really had sustained success in the U.S. or extensive posthumous cult adoration or notable widespread influence here, most viewers will learn plenty even from this lightweight chronicling.

This program will function quite nicely as well as a nice snapshot of Swinging London and the original Mod scene. Though, as the program progresses through the Small Faces' recording career some youngsters may well find inspiration in their early mix of raw playing, R&B riffing and pop tuneage ala "Whatcha Gonna Do About It" (which served as an essential primer for 70's punk rockers alongside "I'm Not Your Stepping Stone") as well as in later tracks like "Itchycoo Park" which mixed rambling nursery rhyme melodies with acid rock studio effects and pro-drug lyrics. All this stuff was strikingly original in its time and still sounds powerful and distinctive 40 years (yipes!) on. [Sexy Intellectual]

-Howard W.

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